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LETTER DATED 5 DECEMBER 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey to you the attached report which I received today from Ambassador Robert R. Fowler, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, pursuant to paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 1080 (1996). I should be grateful if you would bring the text of the report to the attention of the members of the Council.

I also wish to refer to paragraphs 9 and 10 of resolution 1080 (1996), in which the Security Council requested me to report to it on the establishment of a voluntary trust fund for the purpose of supporting African participation in the temporary multinational force authorized under paragraph 5 of that resolution. The Trust Fund was established on 25 November 1996.

Several Member States have indicated their willingness to participate in the Fund. However, no contributions have been received so far, since the nature and size of the multinational force, on which the strength of the African participation would depend, is yet to be finalized. I should be grateful if you would also bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

Annex

Letter dated 5 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit a report on the multinational force for eastern Zaire. This report is submitted pursuant to the requirement set out in paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 1080 (1996), in which the Council "requests the Member States participating in the multinational force to provide periodic reports at least twice monthly, through the Secretary-General, to the Council, the first such report to be made no later than 21 days after the adoption of this resolution".

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and the report (see enclosure) circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Robert R. FOWLER
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Enclosure

Report dated 5 December 1996 on the multinational force for eastern Zaire pursuant to Security Council resolution 1080 (1996)

1. Security Council resolution 1080 (1996) established a two-part mandate for the multinational force: facilitating the immediate return of humanitarian organizations and the effective delivery by civilian relief organizations of humanitarian aid to alleviate the immediate suffering of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in eastern Zaire; and facilitating the voluntary, orderly repatriation of refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as well as the voluntary return of displaced persons.

2. Since the adoption of resolution 1080 (1996) on 15 November 1996, the situation on the ground in eastern Zaire has improved significantly. With the welcome voluntary repatriation of a large number of refugees to Rwanda and the increase in access, albeit limited, of humanitarian organizations in eastern Zaire, progress towards the fulfilment of both elements of the mandate has already been achieved. However, it is possible there might be an appreciable number of refugees and displaced persons in eastern Zaire who still require assistance, and the multinational force has been undertaking aerial and ground reconnaissance missions in order to obtain a clearer picture of the location, number, needs and intentions of the remaining refugees and displaced persons.

3. The Force Commander is working in close collaboration with humanitarian organizations. He has put in place a small civilian liaison team to advise him, comprising (a) a political adviser, (b) a humanitarian adviser and (c) a legal and human rights adviser. A civil-military operations centre has been opened in Entebbe. A reconnaissance party is currently establishing a forward liaison detachment in Rwanda near the Zairian border at Gisenyi to liaise with humanitarian organizations operating in the Gisenyi and Goma area and to facilitate contact with local authorities in the mountain region west of Lake Kivu. General Baril will continue to meet with parties in the region to negotiate increased access for humanitarian organizations farther into eastern Zaire. We are requesting all States with influence in the region also to assist in this regard, bearing in mind that the objectives of the mission are purely humanitarian.

4. The Force Commander has had numerous contacts with the Governments of Uganda, Zaire and Rwanda, and with other leaders in eastern Zaire, to solicit their support for the multinational force.

5. A Status of Forces Agreement has been concluded with the Government of Uganda, and multinational force headquarters have been established at Kampala. We are working on similar agreements with the Governments of Kenya and Rwanda, and we are in regular contact with the Government of Zaire to secure its full cooperation. An internationally staffed planning unit in Stuttgart, Germany, is operational. Currently there are 345 multinational force personnel in theatre in Uganda and Rwanda, with 32 military personnel in the planning group in Stuttgart.

6. The decision to deploy the multinational force was taken on 29 November 1996. Prior to that time, Canada had held a series of meetings with interested States in an effort to secure the international support needed to constitute the force. Several meetings involving all interested and participating Member States took place in New York and Ottawa. Countries wishing to participate in the military planning of the multinational force convened in Stuttgart. In Geneva, Canada brought together a number of countries to assist Rwanda in its efforts to absorb large numbers of refugees.

7. At a meeting in New York on 26 November for potential contributors, Canada sought agreement for the establishment of multinational force headquarters, enhanced reconnaissance and planning for, and possible implementation of, airdrops and, as eventually may be warranted and feasible, convoys with military escorts. Information was also sought on the precise nature of military or financial contributions.

8. More than 20 countries responded to Canada's appeal of 26 November for contributions to the multinational force. Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, and the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Doug Young, announced on 28 November that agreement had been reached to set up a multinational headquarters in the region and to put in place the capability to carry out airdrops of food into eastern Zaire should they prove necessary.

9. Minister Axworthy defined the following as the immediate priorities: improving our capacity to help humanitarian organizations; gathering more information about the whereabouts and needs of the refugees; and beginning airdrops, if they were needed.

10. Within the context of Security Council resolution 1080 (1996), political direction and coordination for the force will henceforth be provided by a Steering Group composed of key contributors of troops, equipment and funding. The Steering Group convened for the first time on Friday, 29 November, in Ottawa. The objectives of that meeting were (a) to constitute the Group formally; (b) to approve the concept of operations outlined in New York on 26 November (including setting up headquarters, harmonization of national activities under way, enhanced reconnaissance and preparation for airdrops, if appropriate); and (c) to transmit a situation report from the Force Commander. The Steering Group meeting was followed immediately by a meeting for all troop contributors. Subsequent meetings of the Steering Group and of troop contributors will be held in New York, at times still to be determined.

11. The Steering Group is composed of Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, France, Ireland (European Union Presidency), Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. In addition, there have been regular meetings of all troop contributors to ensure that they are fully informed. The mandate of the Steering Group is, first, to exchange information on developments relating to the multinational force and, within the authorization of Security Council resolution 1080 (1996), to decide on any major change to the concept of operations and mission tasks for the force, and, second, to ensure liaison on issues of humanitarian assistance.

12. A fundamental tenet of our approach to constituting the multinational force has been the importance accorded to African participation. African countries form an important part of the group of countries that have come forward to contribute to the force. African countries constitute a significant portion of the Steering Group, and there will be a significant African participation in any level of deployment of the force. A United Nations Trust Fund has been established to support African participation in the multinational force.

13. The purpose of the multinational force, as set out in resolution 1080 (1996), is a strictly humanitarian one. The force is only one component of the humanitarian response of the international community. At the same time as the force carries out its mandate, the international community should focus on the smooth reintegration of returnees into their home communities by helping to strengthen the human rights, judicial and political safeguards that will prevent future refugee flows. The international community should also focus on a longer-term solution to the deep-rooted problems that face people in the region. The report of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, on the role of the United Nations in the subregion and the nature and structure of its presence there, will be of particular relevance, as will various other regional initiatives now being undertaken by African leaders.

14. We will continue to provide, pursuant to our obligation under resolution 1080 (1996), timely reports to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution.